

# PCCCR

PLAIN COMPASSION CRISIS RESPONSE

DON'T FORGET!  
**UP TO \$25,000  
IN DONATIONS  
ARE MATCHED  
THROUGH THE  
END OF THE  
YEAR.**

 **COLOMBIA**

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2019

# FROM THE CEO

BY MIKE STOLTFUS



Greeting of love,

It's hard to believe, but we're already in that time of year when we reflect and think back on all the things God has done in the past year. If I had to choose one word to describe the year of 2019 it would be Extreme.

Yea, it's been a year with times of extreme trials and testing. But mostly it's been a year of extreme blessings. It's been a year of ups and downs. Or should I say, downs and ups? Because after every dip in the road God has enabled us, through your support, to reach another level as a team, as a family, and as a ministry. Thanks to you, it's been a year of more ups than downs. Thanks to you, it's been a year of touching thousands of hearts with the message of Love. Thousands of people that have never known that Jesus came for them, too. Thousands of people that have never known anything but the fear and hatred of Islam or Catholicism.

One of the dips (at least it felt that way at the time) was when we were forced to close the project in Bangladesh in September. We all prayed so hard, our volunteers and you poured out so much, that to see it close was really hard. However, in the months since then we have heard multiple testimonies of just how much our time there meant to them. Because of our time there, the local team was introduced to a living gospel and is now seeing the truth. Pray with us that the seeds that were planted would take root and grow and bring forth a mighty harvest.

Thanks to you we were able to get the community center in Iraq started and running well. Here we have been able to reach out to not only the children, but their parents and the camp staff as well. About 40 students are being directly impacted on a day to day basis. Hundreds of people are being impacted because of that.

Thanks to you we were able to meet the immediate needs of thousands of Syrian Kurds that have fled for their lives in the last few weeks. Now thousands of them are seeing (many for the first time) a religion of Love modeled in a way they can see.

I could go on and on it seems... I could tell of the hundreds who are being fed daily in Colombia because of you. I could tell of the little boy who was extremely troubled and refused to settle down until the team prayed for him and he fell asleep on a volunteer's lap. I could tell of the woman who saw the power of God and chose to give her life to the One who gives Life because of it. I could tell of the Venezuelan family who had walked all the way to Bogota, in Colombia, to find work only to find that there was nothing and was forced to walk all the way back. Of their utter despair. Of how we were able to minister to them, to provide water and food for their journey, a safe place to sleep for the night and most importantly, hope and the knowledge that God still cares for them.

I could also tell of the times that it seemed like we just couldn't go on. Times when it seemed like we just didn't have what it takes to really make a difference. And yet you always seemed to know just when to send a note of encouragement. Funding when we really needed it. And of testimonies from the field that always seemed to come at just the right time to encourage us and keep us going. Truly, the God we serve is a good, good Father. Continually, He is searching for those of us who are willing to take Him at His word and simply step out in faith. No, we don't know what tomorrow will bring but we do know who will bring tomorrow! And by His grace, and with your help, we will continue to press on! In Christ, victory is assured.

## FUNDING NEEDS

### SYRIA

- Heating; fuel stove - \$50 each
- Carpets for on the floors - \$19 each
- Food - \$20 will provide food for an average family for a week

### IRAQ

- \$1,000 per week for operating the center

### COLUMBIA

- Children's ministry - \$15 will cover the costs of an evening program for children
- Street ministry - \$150 provides 300 Tamales to hand out to the homeless
- Ministry vehicle - \$10,000 for a decent, used mini-van for the team's use
- Refuge of Hope - \$300 per month covers the rent for the shelter in Piedequesta



## A DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Coming to Arauca, Colombia has been a journey of faith. From the very beginning the enemy of all who live here has made it clear that he does not want us in his domain. But God Who called us has confirmed the call repeatedly and provided resources, contacts, inspiration, healing, and wisdom. Gloria Dios!!! Jesus Christ is worthy to receive the reward for his suffering!

If I were to make a list of our activities in order of their importance, I would place worship at the very top. Our foremost mission is breaking through the darkness that holds this place and nothing is more hated by the enemy than sincere worship of our glorious King!

Alex Lopez is a local Columbian from Bogota who has been very instrumental in opening the doors for us and establishing contacts that enable us to partner with other churches and local organizations. His understanding of the language and culture has really empowered us as missionaries to accomplish the task. He carries a personal call from God to work with Venezuelans and I have yet to see the extent of his vision. He is also a lawyer and provides free legal services for Venezuelans who cannot afford to pay for it.

Pray for us as we sort through the many opportunities that have presented themselves. We are currently distributing Hayacas (Tamales) and water morning and evening 5 to 6 days a week. The Hayacas, as they are known in Venezuela, are being prepared by Believers who are living in La Refugio, a shack town of 8,000 inhabitants. In the afternoons we walk the dirt roads and foot paths that connect the shacks and interact with those we meet. We have many amazing opportunities to pray, distribute food, play with the children, hear their stories, and inquire about their spiritual condition. Believers have been encouraged, the lost have heard the way of salvation (at least one conversion), the demon possessed have experienced deliverance, and the sick have received healing in Jesus name! Everyone wants prayer! We are invited into homes just to pray. When asked what they wanted prayer for one elderly couple said "Everything!" Prayer ministry alone could occupy all our time here. And why not? Who better to meet the needs of these people than their Creator? It is an amazing experience to walk into the village and say, "What will He do today in this place for these people". The village leaders have even asked us to construct a community center that would serve as an overnight shelter and a way to connect and minister to people throughout the day. We are still working on the details for this venture.

Another opportunity is to develop a shelter within Arauca. We opened a house for that purpose which turned into a team center. There is another house that needs repairs which we are making plans to rent and use for the shelter.

The women volunteers have begun a children's ministry and the first night was a huge success. Many are hungry for relationship! They are open to the message of the gospel! There is a faithful church here as well and we have been able to partner with them which is a huge blessing.

This first month has been a lot of prayer and stepping out in faith. Opportunities abound and the process of following through with them to discern what is of God and what is a distraction is quite a ride.

Please join us in prayer for wisdom that we would know what God's will is in each situation and each project:

- That He will open the doors that we need to walk through and that He will shut the doors that are not for us.
- For our physical, emotional, and spiritual health.
- For courage, confidence and boldness for each team member.
- For unity as a team here on the field.
- For Mike and Amber Weaver who will be joining us on the field in December. Pray that God will bless him as he takes over the leadership here and develops what has been started.
- For guidance for current team members who need to decide if God is calling them to a longer term of service.
- That we who are serving could build our understanding of the language quickly so that we can be more effective.
- For healing for respiratory issues which have affected our voices, making it difficult to sing.

Thank you to all who have been holding us up through prayer, finances, and encouraging words. God bless you richly for your investment in The Kingdom. I am grateful that we are not alone out here. We feel the prayer support and spiritual covering that your support is providing for us! You are the body that is enabling us to be the hands and feet of Christ here in Arauca. 🇨🇴





## A REPORT FROM THE FIELD

Greetings from Colombia! There are so many things to love here; the beautiful trees and flowers, the flashy feathered birds, the delicious food... the list could go on, but the thing I most love in Colombia are all the precious, beautiful people! We have many opportunities to reach out to the Venezuelan and Colombian peoples every day. We get to pray and watch the miracles happen. We get to love and watch lives become changed. We get to reach out in our nothingness and watch as God comes in His fullness to flow through us. We get to see His faithfulness every day, in the big things and in the little things. It is an amazing privilege to be a part of what God is doing here in Colombia!

Wherever you or I may be, all around us there are millions of hurting people rushing through aimless, empty lives, striving to fill that ever-aching, ever-growing void in their hearts. That void that cries out to be filled with a fullness they have never known. Sometimes we get so caught up in the hurry and scurry of life that we fail to embrace the living, breathing blessings all around us as we would Christ Himself. Sometimes we look into their eyes and shrink from all the pain spilling from those depths of turmoil, forgetting that their pain and tears are His pain and tears. Sometimes we forget that it's the hurting who need healing, that it's the unloved who need loved, and that it's the broken hearts that need bound up. Well, we do know these things, but we don't always live like we know, DO like we know! All the blessings God has given us are not for us to keep. Jesus spilled His blood, His very life, for us! How could we hold anything back from Him?! He poured Himself out to the hungry and sick, the hurting and hopeless; shouldn't we do the same? Today, whoever you are, wherever you are, there is someone you will come in contact with that needs you! Maybe they need a prayer, a hug, a smile, a song, a listening ear, or a gentle touch. Whatever it is, take the opportunity to bless! Be a messenger of hope today, be a touch of love, a whisper of peace. Be the hands and heart of Jesus!

Blessings be upon you! In Christ's love, Sarah



# PRAYERS & ISIS

by Lena, Iraq volunteer

The community center at camp Berseve # 2 is a bright spot filled with lots of energy and life each Monday to Thursday.

Currently we have around 50 students there every day. We are teaching various things including working with computers, English, and volleyball. And then we have a children's hour for a group of young children, most of whom have lost one or both parents. It is exciting to watch them learn and use what they are learning. Really though, it's not so much about the skills we are teaching here but about investing in these young lives so full of potential; bringing light and truth to them.. and healing to broken hearts.


Recently an 11-year-old boy who was rescued from ISIS started coming and we just hang out and play games with him and bless him in any way we can. He was very traumatized by all he experienced, to the point that he has tried to kill his mother since he came back. But, glory to God, his parents are saying he is a changed person and is changing more every day!

We have a great desire to carry the presence of God with us and that it would be felt by all the people that come. Sadly, at this point we are not able to work in this camp and be very open about the Gospel at the same time but that will not keep us from shining the light of Christ. And regardless, we trust Him to show us when and what to speak. He is working even now and opening many doors of opportunity and connections.

Please join us in prayer:

- That we would be given favor with the camp leaders and officials.
- That there would be more freedom to share the Gospel.
- For wisdom as we teach, and that many lives would be eternally impacted for God's glory.



Today our team played the second round of the tournament. We lost these games; however, we still have another set coming up. It was a challenge for the girls to overcome the loss since there was some rivalry going on between the girls of the 2 teams. It didn't help that the referee seemed to be biased toward the other team but it was a great opportunity to teach the girls how to release the anger and frustration, and to let it go. The volleyball team has been a really great opportunity to teach them principles of teamwork such as working together despite their differences, appreciating the strengths of their teammates and being willing to work together for a common goal. 

# SYRIAN REFUGEES

BY DANIEL BEILER

This morning we visited 3 schools where some of the refugees are staying. In these schools they have 1 or 2 families in each classroom. The rooms are cold with no heat source. There is a community kitchen in each school, where volunteers cook 3 meals a day.


The people we met had basic food, blankets, and mattresses, but there are no carpets for the concrete floors, and they have no heaters. All the 64 schools in the city are occupied by the refugees. The 84,000 students that were attending the school no longer have access. This is creating a secondary problem since none of these children are currently able to attend school.

In the afternoon we visited a refugee camp that is in the process of being built. It is quite challenging for them since the U.N. and all U.N. affiliated organizations are forbidden to help these refugees. The world is intentionally looking the other way and refusing to acknowledge this humanitarian crisis. They are not even giving the displaced people IDP (Internally Displaced Persons) or Refugee status which makes aid much harder to get. Most of the world is silent, and it has to do with a political agenda put in place by leaders that govern the world. And the innocent are paying the price for it once more.

They are having a challenge even building the camp. It is currently a bunch of tents sitting in the dust and dirt. However, with the rainy season starting, it will soon be a mud hole unless they get funding to do things right. Currently there are 2,600 people in the camp. There are no toilets, and no showers there, although there are several plastic water tanks that get refilled daily. This water is used for drinking. They have been eating cold food out of tin cans, mainly consisting of bologna, cheese, beans, tuna etc.

Some days they barely had any food. This evening we helped install 2 communal kitchens there. Another organization will provide the food, logistics, and volunteers to do the cooking. Starting tomorrow these 2,600 people will have hot meals 3 times a day. Currently there are still people fleeing the fighting which is 30 - 60 minutes north of the camp. All the people that are fleeing are going directly to this camp.

I talked with several people about their experiences the last 6 weeks. Most of them could not get it out fast enough, and as soon as they were finished the next person started talking about their story. They are extremely grateful that somebody cared enough to listen to them and to hear their story.

Tomorrow we plan to check another area further west where the needs are probably about the same, then we will return and get a more detailed overview of the refugee camp. 



## YAZIDI BOY'S JOURNEY

By this time we were almost too exhausted to care, much less get excited. Our emotions were so wrecked by now that when the truck came around the bend and ground to a halt less than ten feet away from us, we just sat there looking at it until someone jumped off the back of the truck and came running towards us. "Come! Come!" He said, "The border is open, let's get you out of here!"


The border is open? That got our attention! Quickly we scrambled to our feet and were pushed and pulled onto the back of the flat bed truck. We managed to stay together as we all huddled in a back corner of the old, dusty dump truck. Old and dusty or not, I felt a rush of excitement, the first I had felt for days. In fact, we were all hopeful for the first time in a long time. We were getting off the mountain! No one really seemed to know exactly where we were going but we were going off the mountain.

I ran my tongue over my parched and cracked lips. I sure hoped we would find water somewhere, and soon. It seemed like days since I had had even a small drink and being in the desert, in the heat of summer, had made me yearn for water in a way that I had never yearned for anything in my life.

The truck moved slowly down the mountain, lurching around switchback after switchback and I closed my eyes to keep the flying dust from finding a home in them. After what seemed like an eternity (but was more likely only a few hours) the truck ground to a halt. I peeked out from under my crossed arms that I had been using to rest my head on and saw that we had arrived at a checkpoint. Soldiers milled about, all of them looking tense and scared. I had to wonder, what had they seen in the last few weeks? I looked toward the front of the truck and saw the truck driver leaning out of his window and talking animatedly with a few soldiers. I couldn't hear them well enough to understand what he said but it must have been enough to satisfy them as he jerked his head back into the cab and we lurched forward.

We traveled all day and into the night, stopping frequently at checkpoints where the driver would talk with the soldiers before being waved on. After a few miles the roads were better and we settled down and listened to the tires humming on the pavement. Taking us, where? The farther we traveled the farther we were from the fearful ISIS soldiers but the farther we were from our home as well. Many, many people, thousands of them, were going the same way we were. Most of them were walking. Trudging along in the hot, dry desert. I knew that, if it wouldn't be for Dalal's heart condition we would be walking as well but the truck driver had agreed to allow us to stay together as a family and ride when Papa had explained her medical condition. If she had to walk, she could die. Her health had already been strained by the desperate flee up the mountain and we were extremely grateful that we could ride. I looked up at the stars twinkling overhead. Was god real? Was he up there somewhere? Why didn't he help us? I buried my face in my hands and tried to sleep. There was no cushion in the back of this dump truck. I was so hungry my stomach ached. I was so parched for lack of water I was pretty sure I was gonna die. But with every minute we came closer to safety. I didn't know where we were going but I was sure it would be safe there. I heard people mentioning Turkey as I drifted in and out of sleep. Turkey. Yes, there were many Kurds living in Turkey. They would keep us safe I thought as I drifted off to sleep once more.

I jerked awake once more as the truck came to an abrupt halt. I looked up to see a line of people, travel weary and worn, walking ahead. The driver hopped out of the cab and came walking toward the back of the truck. "This is as far as I can go," I heard him say. "You must walk from here. Don't worry, it's not far anymore, only about 5 kilometers. To tell the truth I really didn't know if I could walk 5 kilometers without collapsing in a heap. I felt totally worn out and drained. My throat hurt, my tongue was swollen, and my skin was dry and caked with dirt. Wearily, we climbed down and started following the crowd of people. I simply focused on putting one foot in front of the other as we walked slowly north.

Suddenly we crested a hill and stopped in confusion. As far as we could see, thousands of people were crowded up against the border fence. A border fence topped with razor wire. With stone faced soldiers keeping watch with machine guns in case anyone managed to slip through a hole in the fence. Yes. The border was closed. We had come to late. There was no rest for us here. People were shouting, milling about, trying to convince the soldiers to open the border. However, by this time, Turkey had already admitted more than 1 million refugees and they didn't know how to handle any more as all their refugee camps were already full. We were stuck. We couldn't go back. We couldn't go forward. What now? 

## PLAIN COMPASSION CRISIS RESPONSE

PO BOX 356

HONEY BROOK, PA 19344

(717) 833-4727 • INFO@PLAINCOMPASSION.ORG • WWW.PLAINCOMPASSION.ORG

## HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

- Pray for us
- Partner with us financially
- Host an awareness event at your church
- Volunteer

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### SYRIA

We are looking for a young man to lead the project in Syria. Previous experience with PCCR (or similar organization) is required. This is a very dangerous field and safe return is not guaranteed. Please contact us for more information.

### COLOMBIA

- Two girls to serve in as house keepers and cooks
- Spanish speaking volunteers

### LOCALLY

We have a need for local people (Honey Brook and surrounding area) that would be willing to drive volunteers to and from the airport. We have a van available for use. If you'd be interested in serving in this way, please contact us.



If you are not on our mailing list and would like to receive this newsletter please contact us and we will be glad to add your name to the mailing list. If you would like to receive these in bulk to distribute to your church please note the number of newsletters you would like to receive. This is a free publication but our supporters can contribute towards the cost of this newsletter if they wish.